

Draft

Northern & Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

an amendment to the California Desert Conservation Area Plan 1980
and Sikes Act Plan with the California Department of Fish and Game



**U.S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District
and**

**California Department of Fish and Game
Inland, Deserts, and Eastern Sierra Region**





United States Department of the Interior

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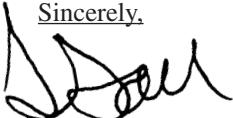
February 26, 2001

Dear Reviewer:

Enclosed for your review is the Draft **Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Plan** (Plan) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Planning began in 1994. The planning area covers 5.5 million acres in the southeastern California Desert, and is one of several land use plans in progress in the California Desert. The document describes and analyzes a number of alternatives for managing species and habitats on federal lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Joshua Tree National Park (JTNP), and the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) Chocolate Mountains Aerial Gunnery Range. Public scoping identified several issues. These include 1) recovery of the desert tortoise, a listed (threatened) species under both federal and state endangered species acts; 2) conservation of the variety of other species and habitats; and 3) public lands access and uses. A wide variety of decisions is proposed. These include both land use allocations and on-the-ground actions. BLM is the lead agency for the Plan.

It is worth noting some very important Plan features. First, the Plan is a collaborative project by several federal, state, and local agencies and citizens who represent a variety of public interests. A positive spirit of cooperation has stimulated every step in the planning process and has been the basis of creative solutions to very difficult issues. The cooperators are listed in Chapter 7 of the EIS and deserve our full appreciation. Second, the Plan integrates land management among BLM, JTNP, and USMC. This creates a regional basis for, and improves, local decisions. Third, the Plan will amend BLM's California Desert Conservation Area Plan, complement the existing JTNP General Management Plan and Backcountry and Wilderness Management Plan, and serve as a basis for a biological resources management plan for the Chocolate Mountains Aerial Gunnery Range. Fourth, mechanisms are proposed for long-term collaborative implementation, monitoring, and Plan maintenance. Fifth, the Plan provides strategic, ecosystem-comprehensive management, including a programmatic biological opinion for the desert tortoise. This in turn should reduce the need for further species listings, provide for desert tortoise recovery, and streamline the processing of land use permits.

The public comment period for the draft Plan and EIS is 90 days. It begins February 26 and ends May 26. Please mail comments to the letterhead address with attention to Lead, Northern & Eastern Colorado Desert Plan. Comments on the draft Plan and the adequacy of the EIS will be considered in preparing the Proposed Plan and Final EIS. Public meetings will also be held in various cities in and around the planning area to receive comments. The dates, times, and locations of these meetings will be announced later.

Sincerely,

Tim Salt
District Manager

Enclosure

Cover Sheet

Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

Draft

Lead Agency: U.S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District

Project Location: (portions of) Riverside, Imperial, and San Bernardino counties, California

Abstract: The Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Plan and Environmental Impact Statement provides alternative scenarios for a comprehensive framework for managing species and habitats, including recovery of the desert tortoise, on Federal lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management, the eastern half of Joshua Tree National Park, and the Chocolate Mountains Aerial Gunnery Range (administered by the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station, Yuma). Bureau of Land Management Field Offices included in the planning area are (portions of) Needles, Palm Springs, and El Centro.

This document was produced through a coordinated process involving numerous special interest groups and local, state, and Federal agencies, including the three noted above.

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Public Comments period: 90 days, ending May 26, 2001.

February 2001

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Inland, Deserts, and Eastern Sierra Region
February 2000

District Manager, Bureau of Land Management

Regional Manager, California Department of Fish and Game

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Summary

The following pages provide summaries of four Plan alternatives (Table S-1) and their cumulative impacts (Table S-2). Chapters Two and Four, respectively, provide a more complete description of Plan alternatives and impacts. Chapter One and the introductory pages to Chapter Two provide an overview on the need, purpose, and general nature of the Plan. The reader is encouraged to read these parts of the document prior to reading the Summary.



Table S-1 Summary of Alternative

The following table displays a summary of management for each issue within each alternative. More details are shown in Chapter 2 and the consequences of these management prescriptions are in Chapter 4.

| Issues | No Action Alternative | Preferred/Large DWMA Alternative | Small DWMA “A” Alternative | Small DWMA “B” Alternative |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| Standards & Guidelines | Manage ecosystem health with the National Fallback Standards | Manage ecosystem health with the Regional Standards | Same as Preferred Alternative. | Same as Preferred Alternative. |
| Recovery of the Desert Tortoise | Manage grazing activities with “fallback” guidelines from page 5. | Manage grazing activities with guidelines from page 7/8. | Same as No Action Alternative. | Manage grazing activities with guidelines from page 8/9. |
| | Manage current Category I and II desert tortoise habitat in the Chemehuevi area. | Designated 874,843 acres as the <i>Chemehuevi DWMA</i> . | Designate 741,440 acres as the <i>Chemehuevi DWMA</i> . | Same as Small DWMA “A” Alternative. |
| | Manage current Category I and II desert tortoise habitat and the Chuckwalla Bench ACEC in the Chuckwalla area. | Designate 720,077 acres as the Chuckwalla DWMA. | Designate 632,094 acres as the <i>Chuckwalla DWMA</i> . | Same as Small DWMA “A” Alternative. |
| | JTNP is managed according to the General Management Plan and with an emphasis on natural ecosystem management policies. | Designate JTNP as the JTNP DWMA. | Same as Preferred Alternative. | Same as Preferred Alternative. |
| | Manage <i>Chuckwalla Bench ACEC</i> and <i>Milpitas Wash HMP</i> according to existing plans. | Delete <i>Chuckwalla Bench ACEC</i> and <i>Milpitas Wash HMP</i> which are incorporated into proposed DWMA. | Delete <i>Chuckwalla Bench ACEC</i> which is incorporated into the proposed DWMA. | Same as Small DWMA “A” Alternative. |
| | Retain existing <i>Multiple-Use Class designations</i> . | Re-designate all <i>Multiple-Use Class M</i> lands in proposed DWMAs as <i>Multiple-Use Class L</i> . | Same as Preferred Alternative. | Same as Preferred Alternative. |
| | Retail existing Category I, II, and III Desert Tortoise Habitat area. | Designate proposed DWMAs as Category I Desert Tortoise Habitat. | Same as Preferred Alternative. | Same as Preferred Alternative. |

Table S-1 Summary of Alternative

| Issues | No Action Alternative | Preferred Alternative | Small DWMA “A” Alternative | Small DWMA “B” Alternative |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| Recovery of the Desert Tortoise | Surface disturbing projects are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. | Limit cumulative new surface disturbance to 1 percent. | Same as No Action Alternative. | Limit cumulative new surface disturbance to 3 percent. |
| | Compensation required according to California Statewide Policy. | Compensation for disturbance of public lands within DWMAs will be required at a 5:1 ratio. | Compensate for disturbance of public lands within DWMAs will be required according to the Statewide Policy. | Same as the Small DWMA A Alternative. |
| | ACECs entry points are signed and in certain cases, fenced. | Fence, sign or patrol the periphery of DWMAs to control conflicts with adjacent land uses. | Fence, sign or patrol the periphery of DWMAs only where there are conflicts with adjacent land uses to control conflicts. | The periphery of the DWMAs will not be fenced. |
| | Boundary of Lazy Daisy Allotment will remain unchanged | Reduce Lazy Daisy Allotment by 21,606 acres. | Reduce Lazy Daisy Allotment by 140,357 acres. | Same as the Small DWMA A Alternative. |
| | Boundary of Chemehuevi Allotment will remain unchanged. | Ephemeral authorization will be eliminated, Chemehuevi lease will be terminated. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Portion of Chemehuevi Cattle Allotment falling within the highest density tortoise habitat will be eliminated. |
| | Not addressed. | The terms and conditions of the 1994 BO will be added to the CDCA Plan Grazing Element. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as Preferred Alternative. |
| | Not addressed. | Cattle allotment lessee may voluntarily relinquish all grazing authorizations. | Not addressed. | Same as Preferred Alternative. |
| | Perennial plant utilization may not exceed 40 percent in any key area. | When ephemeral forage production is less than 230 pounds per acre, cattle shall be substantially removed for the DWMA. | Not addressed. | Same as the No Action Alternative. |

Table S-1 Summary of Alternative

| Issues | No Action Alternative | Preferred Alternative | Small DWMA “A” Alternative | Small DWMA “B” Alternative |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| Recovery of the Desert Tortoise | Permits for live vegetation harvest may be issued in non-wilderness areas after environmental review. | Permits for live vegetation harvest may be issued after environmental review for only within salvage areas inside where surface disturbance has been authorized. | Same as No Action Alternative. | Permits for live vegetation harvest may be issued after environmental review for creosote bush stems or any plant within salvage areas where surface disturbance has been authorized. |
| | Lands acquired through compensation or mitigation are classified OPEN for disposal or use, under authorities listed on page 16. | Lands acquired through compensation or mitigation will be classified CLOSED for disposal or use, under authorities listed on page 19. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | Fencing of major highways and railroads will be considered as mitigation for new construction projects. | Interstate, State highways and railroads will be fenced as called for in Table 2-6 page 21 Preferred Alternative. | Interstate, State highways and railroads will be fenced as called for in Table 2-6 page 21 Small DWMA A Alternative. | Interstate, State highways and railroads will be fenced as called for in Table 2-6 page 21 Small DWMA B Alternative. |
| | Bridges and culverts will be considered mitigation when new construction projects are proposed. | Bridges and culverts for animal passage will be required for new linear projects. | Bridges and culverts for animal passage will be required for new linear projects and existing linear projects will be retrofitted. | Bridges and culverts for animal passage will be required for new linear projects and existing linear projects will be retrofitted. |
| | Stopping, parking, and camping within proposed DWMAs will be allowed only within 100 feet of a route within sensitive areas such as ACECs. | Stopping, parking and vehicle camping will be allowed 100 feet from the centerline of the road inside DWMAs. | Stopping, parking, and camping within proposed DWMAs will be allowed in designated areas only. | Stopping, parking, and camping within proposed DWMAs will be allowed only within 300 feet of a route. |
| | Federal agencies will not dispose of public lands within Category I habitat. | Federal agencies will not dispose of public lands within proposed DWMA. | Same as Preferred Alternative. | BLM may dispose of public lands within proposed DWMA if it augments the overall management strategy. |
| | Raven management is accomplished by evaluating projects on a case by case basis and appropriate mitigation is prescribed. | Proposed projects which potentially increase raven populations within five miles of DWMA will require mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate proliferation of ravens. | Same as Preferred Alternative. | Same as Preferred Alternative. |

Table S-1 Summary of Alternative

| Issues | No Action Alternative | Preferred Alternative | Small DWMA “A” Alternative | Small DWMA “B” Alternative |
|---|---|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| Recovery of the Desert Tortoise | Raven management is accomplished by evaluating projects on a case by case basis and appropriate mitigation is prescribed. | Remove ravens that are known to prey on tortoise through selective shooting, poisoning, or trapping and euthanization where there is evidence of raven predation in or within 1 mile of tortoise habitat. | Ravens that are known to prey on tortoise may removed through non-lethal means only. | Same as the Small DWMA A Alternative. |
| | Not addressed. | Raven management is accomplished by evaluating projects on a case-by-case project basis and appropriate mitigation is prescribed. | Same as Preferred Alternative. | Same as Preferred Alternative. |
| | Manage Categories with current boundaries. | All Desert Tortoise Category I, II and III outside of DWMA boundaries will be converted and managed as Category III habitat. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| Special Status Animals and Plants and Natural Communities. | Continue implementation of current HMPs. | Designate essential habitat for the Sonoran Desert Bighorn Sheep and the Southern Mojave Desert Bighorn Sheep as WHMAs (Map 2-18). | Same as Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| Desert Bighorn Sheep | Continue implementation of current HMPs. | Delete all current bighorn sheep HMPs which are captured inside WHMAs. | Same as Preferred Alternative. | Same as Preferred Alternative. |

Table S-1 Summary of Alternative

| Issues | No Action Alternative | Preferred Alternative | Small DWMA “A” Alternative | Small DWMA “B” Alternative |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| Desert Bighorn Sheep Continued | Retain current Multiple Use Class designation in the Eagle Mountains area. | Change Multiple Use Class designation in the Eagle Mountains area from MUC I to MUC L. | Same as Preferred Alternative. | Same as Preferred Alternative. |
| | Not addressed. | Fence potential hazards to bighorn sheep with substantial fencing materials. | Areas with potential hazards to bighorn sheep will not be fenced. | Same as Preferred Alternative. |
| | Manage the Ford Dry Lake Allotment with current boundaries and management practices. | Eliminate the Ford Dry Lake Allotment because it is less than 9 miles from occupied bighorn sheep range. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | Manage the Rice Valley Allotment with current boundaries and management practices. | Eliminate 9,264 acres of the Rice Valley Allotment because it is within 9 miles of current occupied bighorn sheep range. | Eliminate the Rice Valley Allotment because it is less than 9 miles from the Little Maria Mountain deme which will be reestablished. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | Not addressed. | In areas managed for burros, deer, and bighorn sheep, natural water sites will be designated to each on an equal shares basis. | Wild burros will be fenced out of all natural and artificial waters within currently occupied bighorn sheep range in the WHMA. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | Proposals for new water developments will be considered on a case-by-case basis. | Construct 87 new water developments to expand usable habitat both inside and outside of wilderness. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Construct 21 new water developments to expand usable habitat outside of wilderness areas. |
| | Proposals to reestablish lost demes on BLM lands are addressed on a case-by-case basis and require an HMP and State director approval. | Reestablish the following lost demes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cargo Muchacho Mountains• Mule Mountains• Palo Verde Mountains | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |

Table S-1 Summary of Alternative.

| Issues | No Action Alternative | Preferred Alternative | Small DWMA “A” Alternative | Small DWMA “B” Alternative |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Special Status Animals and Plants and Natural Communities. | | | | |
| Desert Mule Deer | Proposals for new water developments are considered on a case-by-case basis. | Construct 50 new water developments to expand usable habitat both inside and outside of wilderness. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Construct 21 new water developments to expand usable habitat outside of wilderness. |
| Other Special Status Animals and Plants and Natural Communities | Habitat of each special status species and each natural community shall be protected using existing land use policies, designations and fallback guidelines. | Designate 542,443 acres as an 80 percent (generally) Multi-species WHMA (Map 2-18). | Designate 812,323 acres an 80 percent (generally) Multi-species WHMA (Map . | Designate 512,455 acres as a 50 percent (generally) Multi-species WHMA. |
| | | Mitigate impacts of proposed projects using commonly applied mitigation measures and surveys. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | | Not addressed. | Bat gates shall be constructed on caves or mine roost only where there is significant potential for negative effects. | Bat gates shall be constructed on all caves or mines roost where entry would pose a hazard to humans or bats outside CMAGR. |
| | | Not addressed. | All significant bat roost sites shall be withdrawn from mineral entry, subject to valid existing rights. | Not addressed. |

Table S-1 Summary of Alternative

| Issues | No Action Alternative 1 | Preferred Alternative | Alternative 2 | Alternative 4 |
|---|--|--|--|------------------------------------|
| Special Status Animals and Plants and Natural Communities. | Not addressed. | All riparian habitat or permanently flowing streams within 5 miles of a maternity roost for Townsend's big-eared bat shall have a riparian proper functioning condition analysis. | All significant roost sites shall be withdrawn, at generally 2.5 acres per site, from mineral entry, subject to valid existing rights. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | Not addressed. | Closure of any route within 1/4 mile of any significant bat roost shall be strongly considered. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as Preferred Alternative. |
| | Not addressed. | OHV races, construction activities, blasting and similar activities shall not be authorized within 1 mile of a prairie falcon or golden eagle eyrie between February 15 through June 15. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | Not addressed. | Closure of any route within 1/4 mile of a prairie falcon or golden eagle eyrie shall be strongly considered. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | Not addressed. | OHV races, construction activities, blasting and similar activities shall not be authorized within 1 mile or a prairie falcon or golden eagle eyrie between February 15 through June 15. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | Remove and control tamarisk and add four nest boxes. | Habitat for elf owl at Corn Springs shall be improved by removing tamarisk to elevate water table, controlling starlings, planting cottonwoods, adding nest boxes and minimizing ground water pumping. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |

Table S-1 Summary of Alternative

| Issues | No Action Alternative | Preferred Alternative | Small DWMA “A” Alternative | Small DWMA “B” Alternative |
|---|--|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Special Status Animals and Plants and Natural Communities. | Not addressed. | Limit construction activity period to September 1 - February 1 if burrowing owls are present. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | Permits for live vegetation harvest may be issued in non-wilderness areas after environmental review. | Harvest of live vegetation shall be prohibited in the Multi-species Conservation Zone to protect perching and nesting sites for thrashers. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | Not addressed. | Limit construction activity period to July 1 - December 1 if Crissal thrashers are present in a project area. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | The following dunes and playas are designated as “open” or “closed” to vehicle use: • Ford Dry Lake (portion of) (Open) • Cadiz Dunes • Rice Valley Dunes (portion of) (Open) | The following dunes and playas shall be closed to vehicle use: • Palen Dunes • Rice Valley Dunes • Ford Dunes • Palen Dry Lake • Ford Dry Lake (portion of) | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | Not addressed. | Special mitigation measure avoiding disturbance of habitat of Couch’s spadefoot toad shall be strongly considered on all projects. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | Not addressed. | Closure of any route within 1/4 mile Couch’s spadefoot toad site shall be strongly considered. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | Not addressed. | Install permanent fencing where unauthorized vehicle use is observed in temporary impoundment areas for Couch’s spadefoot toad. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |

Table S-1 Summary of Alternative

| Issues | No Action Alternative | Preferred Alternative | Small DWMA “A” Alternative | Small DWMA “B” Alternative |
|---|-----------------------|--|---|--|
| Special Status Animals and Plants and Natural Communities. | Not addressed. | Closure of any route within 1/4 mile of a natural or artificial water source shall be strongly considered. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | Not addressed. | Closure of redundant routes shall be strongly considered. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | | Acquisition is primarily focused within some ACECs, tortoise Category I and II habitat and wilderness areas. | Acquire private and SLC lands outside NPS with known occurrence out to one mile from each occurrence of Coachella Valley Milkvetch. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | | Compensation for disturbance in Desert Dry Wash Woodland and Desert Chenopod Scrub communities is not required. | In the Multi-species WHMA, compensation for disturbance of Desert Dry Wash Woodland and Desert Chenopod Scrub communities shall be required at 3 acres for each acre disturbed. | In the Multi-species WHMA, compensation for disturbance of Desert Dry Wash Woodland and Desert Chenopod Scrub communities shall be required at 1 acre for each acre disturbed. |
| | | Compensation for disturbance in Sand Dune and Playa communities that are closed to vehicle use, is not required. | In Sand Dune and Playa communities that are closed to vehicle use, compensation for surface disturbance shall be required at 3 acres for each acre disturbed. | In Sand Dune and Playa communities that are closed to vehicle use, compensation for surface disturbance shall be required at 1 acre for each acre disturbed. |
| | | Not addressed. | Selected Springs and Seep communities shall be improved to enhance habitat for special status bird species. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | | Not addressed. | Construction projects will not disturb Spring and Seep communities during the duration of the project. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |

Table S-1 Summary of Alternative

| Issues | No Action Alternative | Preferred Alternative | Small DWMA “A” Alternative | Small DWMA “B” Alternative |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Wild Horses and Burros | Manage the Chemehuevi and Havasu HMAs with current boundaries and AML of 150 burros as set in the CDCA Plan and the Arizona BLM HMAPs. | Combine Chemehuevi and Havasu HAs and HMAs into one HA and HMA to be named <i>Chemehuevi HA</i> and <i>HMA</i> . The HMA is 147,630 acres and AML is reduced from 150 to a current management level of 108 which shall remain in effect until an AML is established through monitoring of habitat. | Eliminate the Chemehuevi, HAVASU (California side), Chocolate/Mule Mountain, Cibola-Trigo (California side) and Picacho HMAs. | Combine Chemehuevi and Havasu HAs and HMAs into one HA and HMA to be named <i>Chemehuevi HA</i> and <i>HMA</i> . The HMA is 263,021 acres and AML is reduced from 150 burros to a current management level of 108 burros, which shall remain in effect until an AML is established through monitoring. |
| | | Manage the Picacho and Chocolate/Mule Mountains HMAs with current boundaries and AML as set in the CDCA Plan of 42 horses and 22 burros, respectively. The Arizona BLM Cibola/Trigo HMA will be managed with current boundaries and AML as set in their HMAP of 190 burros. | Eliminate the Picacho HMA for horses. Combine historical burro range Chocolate/Mule Mountains, and the Cibola-Trigo HAs into one HA and HMA for burros to be named <i>Chocolate/Mule Mountain HA</i> and <i>HMA</i> . Reduce AML of 212 burros to a current level of 121 burros which shall remain in effect until an AML is established through monitoring. | Eliminate the Picacho HMA for horses. Combine historical burro range, Chocolate/Mule Mountains HA and the Cibola-Trigo HA and HMA for burros to be named <i>Chocolate/Mule Mountains HA</i> and <i>HMA</i> . Manage for a current level of 138 burros until an AML is established through monitoring. |
| | | Manage the Piute Mountain HA for zero burros, removing current population. | Same as the No Action Alternative. | Establish the <i>Piute Mountain HMA</i> (39,780 acres) at current population level of 37 burros until an AML is established through monitoring. |

Table S-1 Summary of Alternative

| Issues | No Action Alternative | Preferred Alternative | Small DWMA “A” Alternative | Small DWMA “B” Alternative |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| Motorized-vehicle Access/Routes of Travel Designation | Routes will be closed in accordance with the biological parameters established in the NECO Plan regardless of Multiple-use Class. | Amend the CDCA Plan to require motorized-vehicle access will be managed in accordance with current MUC-L guidelines irrespective of Multiple-Use Class, except in MUC C and areas designated “open” for vehicle use. | Same as the Preferred/Large DWMA Alternative except that routes designated “open” within DWMAs are limited to paved roads, maintained dirt roads, and recreational touring routes | Same as the Small DWMA A Alternative except that redundant routes outside DWMAs would be designated open. |
| Land Ownership Pattern | All “existing” routes in MUC L areas that have been inventoried and mapped including navigable washes would be designated “open” for motorized-vehicle use except as noted in Chapter 2 page 51. | All “existing” routes that have been inventoried and mapped including navigable washes would be designated “open” for motorized-vehicle use except as noted in Chapter 2 page 59. | Same as the Preferred/Large DWMA Alternative. | Same as the Preferred/Large DWMA Alternative. |
| | Competitive off-highway vehicle events are allowed on competitive recreation routes established through the CDCA Plan, as amended. | Eliminate the <i>Parker 400</i> and the <i>Johnson Valley to Parker</i> route will be permitted in accordance with parameters in Chapter 2 page 62. | Eliminate the <i>Parker 400</i> and the <i>Johnson Valley to Parker</i> routes. | Eliminate the <i>Parker 400</i> and the <i>Johnson Valley to Parker</i> route will be permitted in accordance with parameters in Chapter 2 page 69. |

Table S-2 Cumulative Summary of Alternative Impacts

| Impact Topic | No Action Alternative | Preferred/Large DWMA Alternative | Small DWMA A Alternative | Small DWMA B Alternative |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Impacts to Air Quality <i>From Issue I: Standards and Guidelines</i> | Implementing Standards & Guidelines would promote the maintenance of the processes and functions necessary to maintain and improve healthy soil and vegetation within grazing allotments which would improve air quality from reduced particulate pollutants. | Adoption of the regional standards for Public Land Health, and guidelines for grazing management would be similar to the No Action Alternative. However, the Regional Standards would apply on an area-wide basis rather than just grazing allotments. This additional area could contribute to improvement to air quality at a greater rate. | Impacts are similar to the Preferred Alternative. | Impacts are similar to the Preferred Alternative. |
| Impacts to Water Quality <i>From Issue I: Standards and Guidelines</i> | Implementing the rangeland health standards and guidelines will result in enhancement and improvement in riparian and wetland conditions within grazing allotments through stabilization of streambanks and reduction in water runoff. | Implementation of the National Fallback standards and guidelines, cumulatively with the many other state and regional initiatives to protect, enhance, and maintain ecosystem health, will result in improved rangeland health. There will be less soil erosion, improved vegetative diversity, improved livestock forage, improved upland and riparian habitats, and improved water quality. | Impacts are similar to the Preferred Alternative. | Impacts are similar to the Preferred Alternative. |
| Impacts to Soil Quality <i>From Issue I: Standards and Guidelines</i> | Implementing the rangeland standards and guidelines will result in positive impacts to uplands soils which will improve overall watershed health slowly over a long time frame. | Adoption of the regional standards for Public Land Health, and guidelines for grazing management would be similar to the No Action Alternative. However, the Regional Standards would apply on an area-wide basis rather than just grazing allotments. This additional area could contribute to improvement to soil quality at a greater rate. | Impacts are similar to the Preferred Alternative. | Impacts are similar to the Preferred Alternative. |

Table S-2 Cumulative Summary of Alternative Impacts

| Impact Topic | No Action Alternative | Preferred/Large DWMA Alternative | Small DWMA A Alternative | Small DWMA B Alternative |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| Impacts to Vegetation Management <i>From Issue 1: Standards and Guidelines</i> | Managing ecosystem health in accordance with National Fallback Standards benefit natural communities, ecosystem processes and special status plants by developing standards for soils, riparian/wetlands, stream function and native species within grazing allotments. | Adoption of the regional standards for Public Land Health, and guidelines for grazing management would be similar to the No Action Alternative. However, the Regional Standards would apply on an area-wide basis rather than just grazing allotments. This additional area could contribute to improvement to vegetation at a greater rate. | Same as the No Action Alternative. | Same as the No Action Alternative. |
| <i>From Issue 2: Recovery of the Desert Tortoise</i> | Current Management on 189,564 acres of ACECs has a positive benefit on natural communities and special status plants through specific prescriptions aimed at improving habitat and reducing surface disturbing activities (i.e., route closures, re-vegetating, tamarisk removal). | Managing 1,684,248 acres of ACECs would enhance natural communities and special status plant species by increasing the amount of each community and species inside of an area of protection. Additionally, prescriptions aimed at improving habitat conditions will have a positive effect on natural communities and special status species. | Impacts to natural communities and special status plant species are similar to those discussed in the Preferred Alternative over a smaller area (18%). | Same as the Small DWMA A Alternative. |
| <i>From Issue 5: Motorized Vehicle Access/Routes of Travel Designations/Recreation</i> | Impacts from grazing on 605,453 acres include; disruption of sensitive natural communities, reduction in annual plant diversity and compaction of soils. | Reduction of grazing by 36% will reduce impacts from disruption of sensitive natural communities, reduction in annual plant diversity and compaction of soils. | Reduction of grazing by 69% will have similar positive benefit to natural communities and special status plant species as the Preferred/Large DWMA Alternative on a greater scale. | Positive impacts to natural communities and special status plant species are similar to those described in the Preferred/Large DWMA Alternative. |

Table S-2 Cumulative Summary of Alternative Impacts

| Impact Topic | No Action Alternative | Preferred/Large DWMA | Small DWMA A Alternative | Small DWMA B Alternative |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| <u>From Issue 5: Motorized-Vehicle Access/Routes of Travel Designations/Recreation</u> | Impacts from casual off-road vehicle activity include direct loss of vegetation, introduction and spread of exotic plants and alteration in surface water flow and percolation. | The designation of routes and reduction in the route network will reduce route proliferation and reduce the rate of spread of alien plants along route corridors. Closure of three dunes and two playas to OHV use will aid in restoration of vegetation communities in and around them. | Impacts from the pattern of road designations would be about the same as for the Preferred Action except with fewer “open” roads in DWMAs. Impacts to plant communities and special status plant species; a slightly greater number of “open” roads outside DWMAs would add corresponding additional impact. | Impacts from the pattern of road designations would be about the same as for the Preferred Action with two exceptions: fewer “open” roads in DWMAs will benefit plant communities and special status plant species; a slightly greater number of “open” roads outside DWMAs would add corresponding additional impact. |
| Impacts to Wildlife: Desert Tortoise <i><u>From Issue 1: Standards and Guidelines</u></i> | Desert tortoise have protection through a combination of designated areas including Critical Habitat, Wilderness, JTNP, Military, ACECs and HMPs. | Designation of 1,684.248 acres as ACECs and tortoise DWMAs will provide positive benefits to the desert tortoise through implementation of prescriptions aimed at reducing or eliminating impacts to tortoise. | Designation of 1,384.310 acres as ACECs and tortoise DWMAs will provide similar benefit to the desert tortoise as the Preferred/Large DWMA Alternative. | Same as the Small DWMA A Alternative. |
| <u>From Issue 2: Recovery of the Desert Tortoise</u> | Surface disturbing projects are evaluated on a case by case basis without a limit. Potential impacts include; surface disturbance on a larger scale, little incentive to direct projects to other less sensitive areas and reduced rehabilitation commitments. | Limiting surface disturbing activities to 1% benefits wildlife species through reduction in vegetation removal, decreasing fragmentation affects and maximizing rehabilitation commitments. | Same as the No Action Alternative. | Impacts from limiting surface disturbance to 3% are similar to those discussed in the Small DWMA A Alternative. |
| | Cattle and sheep grazing on 605.453acres effect desert tortoise and other species through: 1) competition for forage; 2) trampling of tortoise burrows; 3) changing of plant composition, density, and cover; and 4) compaction of soils. | The effects of reducing cattle grazing by 36% could include: an improvement in vegetative cover, reduction of competitive grazing between tortoise and cattle, and a reduction in burrow trampling. | Impacts are similar to those discussed in the Preferred/Large DWMA Alternative but to a greater degree due to a reduction of 68%. | Impacts are similar to those discussed in the Preferred/Large DWMA Alternative. |
| | Unfenced highways such as I-40, I-10, and highway 95, cause direct mortality to tortoise as well as habitat | Fencing 114 miles of highways will reduce desert tortoise mortality from highways and increase gene flow by | Fencing 657 miles of highways will have increased protections for tortoise against deaths related to vehicular | Fencing 657 miles of highways will have increased protections for tortoise against deaths related to vehicular |

Table S-2 Cumulative Summary of Alternative Impacts

| Impact Topic | No Action Alternative | Preferred/Large DWMA | Small DWMA A Alternative | Small DWMA B Alternative |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| Impacts to Wildlife: Desert Tortoise Continued | fragmentation, reduced gene flow and additional vandalism from improved access. | providing culverts which allow tortoise to travel under highways safely. | travel. | fencing 57 miles of highways. |
| <i>From Issue 2: Recovery of the Desert Tortoise</i> | Driving in washes can result in damage to vegetation and burrows from travel out of the wash bottom. | The closure of washes to vehicles in some areas of the DWMA will reduce tortoise mortality and crushing of burrows. | The closure of all wash systems has similar positive benefits as the Preferred Alternative, however the size of the DWMA is reduced so that essentially there is the same area of closed wash systems. | Same as the Small DWMA A Alternative. |
| <i>From Issue 4: Wild Horses and Burros</i> | Burro grazing in two Herd Management Areas inside of Critical Habitat can cause impacts to tortoise which include: burrow trampling, competition for forage and a decrease in plant biomass and cover. | Eliminating burro grazing inside of DWMA will have a positive effect on tortoise by reducing competitive forage and improving habitat. | Impacts from elimination of burro grazing throughout the entire Planning Area are similar to those discussed in the Preferred Alternative on a larger scale. | Establishing the Piute Mountain HMA could cause additional impacts to desert tortoise where burro grazing occurs within the HMA. The HMA inside the DWMA and there may be additional impacts to desert tortoise from burrow trampling, competition for forage and degradation to habitat through reduced biomass and plant cover. |
| <i>From Issue 5: Motorized Vehicle Access/Routes of Travel Designations/Recreation</i> | Impacts to desert tortoise from vehicle travel include, death from being struck by vehicles, habitat fragmentation, increased in predator populations using vehicle roadkills, changes in plant community from vehicle-related fires and restriction of movements of tortoises. | Designating routes of travel as “open”, “limited”, and “closed” will result in a decrease in negative impacts associated with off-road activities, such as habitat degradation, proliferation of roads, harassment of wildlife and road kills. | Impacts are similar to the Preferred Alternative. | Impacts are similar to the Preferred Alternative. |
| Impacts to Wildlife: Bighorn Sheep | <i>From Issue 2: Recovery of the Desert Tortoise</i> | Bighorn sheep receive positive benefits from management of JTNP, CMAGR, and BLM wilderness. A total of 75 percent of occupied range are in these protection areas. | Positive impact to bighorn sheep are similar to those described in the No Action Alternative, however there are additional benefits through the designation of 1,684,248 acres of | Same as the Small DWMA A Alternative. |

Table S-2 Cumulative Summary of Alternative Impacts

| Impact Topic | No Action Alternative | Preferred/Large DWMA | Small DWMA A Alternative | Small DWMA B Alternative |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Impacts to Wildlife: Bighorn Sheep Continued <i>From Issue 2: Recovery of the Desert Tortoise</i> | Additionally, there are five HMPs which afford bighorn sheep protection. | ACECs which include specific prescriptions to improve habitat conditions. | (See above) (See Above) | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | Cattle grazing potentially impacts bighorn sheep by competing for forage, by altering the vegetation composition, by introducing diseases, by fouling or disrupting water sources, or by causing changes in behavior or habitat use. | Reduced grazing on 36% of allotments will have a positive impact on bighorn sheep by reducing competitive grazing and alteration of vegetation composition. | Impacts are similar to those discussed in the Preferred Alternative but on a large degree because grazing is reduced by 69% overall. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| <i>From Issue 3: Management of Special Status Animals and Plants and Natural Communities</i> | Five designated HMPs provide protection and enhancement to bighorn sheep through prescriptions aimed at improving herd size and or habitat. HMPs are generally limited by the Multiple-Use Class designation of the area. | Designating two bighorn sheep WHMAs and an 80% Multi-Species WHMA will have a positive benefit to bighorn sheep through prescriptions aimed at reducing impacts to bighorn sheep and reducing the surface disturbance through acquisition. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | Waters are developed on a case-by-case basis | The addition of 87 new water developments will have a positive effect on bighorn sheep by giving access to additional forage more distant from existing waters. With more food and water available, the number of big horn sheep in each deme can be expected to increase. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Impacts from developing 21 artificial waters sites outside wilderness would be similar to those described in the Preferred Alternative but would be over a smaller area. |
| | No addressed. | Closure of some routes near natural or artificial water sources will reduce disturbance of bighorn sheep at critical sites. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as Preferred Alternative. |

Table S-2 Cumulative Summary of Alternative Impacts

| Impact Topic | No Action Alternative | Preferred/Large DWMA | Small DWMA A Alternative | Small DWMA B Alternative |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| Impacts to Wildlife: Bighorn Sheep <i>From Issue 4: Wild Horses and Burros</i> | Burro grazing where Appropriate Management Levels are exceeded cause impacts to bighorn sheep by overgrazing forage, damaging water sources, trampling of soil and denudation of vegetation. | Reduction in burro grazing along with management actions to fence water would benefit sheep by reducing negative impacts such as competition for forage, trampling of soil and denudation of vegetation. | Managing for zero burro grazing in all of the Herd Areas will have a slightly greater positive impact to bighorn sheep by eliminating the negative effects discussed in the Preferred Alternative. | Impacts would be similar to those discussed in the Preferred Alternative. |
| <i>From Issue 5: Motorized Vehicle Access/Routes of Travel Designations/Recreation</i> | Bighorn sheep populations are fragmented by numerous highways, roads, railroads, and aqueducts. | Designating routes of travel as “open”, “limited”, and “closed” will result in a decrease in negative impacts associated with off-road activities, such as habitat degradation, proliferation of roads, harassment of wildlife and road kills. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| Impacts to Wildlife: Other Special Status Species <i>From Issue 2: Recovery of the Desert Tortoise</i> | Current management of ACECs, Wilderness, JTNP, CMAGR, and HMPs provide protection to many species. | Designation of 1,684,248 acres of ACECs will provide protection for species through prescriptions aimed at improving habitat and reducing surface disturbing activities. | Impacts to wildlife species are similar to those discussed in the Preferred Alternative over a smaller area (18%). | Same as the Small DWMA A Alternative. |
| | Surface disturbing projects are evaluated on a case by case basis without a limit. Potential impacts include; surface disturbance on a larger scale, little incentive to direct projects to other less sensitive areas and reduced rehabilitation commitments. | Limiting surface disturbing activities to 1% of the DWMAs will have a positive impact on many species by potentially reducing impacts from habitat reduction | Same as the No Action Alternative. | Impacts from limiting surface disturbance to 3% are similar to those discussed in the Small DWMA A Alternative. |
| <i>From Issue 3: Management of Special Status Animals and Plants and Natural communities</i> | Management of existing ACECs, HMPs, JTNP, CMAGR and Wilderness provide protection for many species and habitats. | Species will have positive benefits from designation of DWMAs and the Multi-species WHMA through prescriptions aimed at reducing surface disturbance, improving natural | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Positive impacts are similar to those discussed in the Preferred Alternative on a slightly smaller scale. |

Table S-2 Cumulative Summary of Alternative Impacts

| Impact Topic | No Action Alternative | Preferred/Large DWMA | Small DWMA A Alternative | Small DWMA B Alternative |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| <i>From Issue 3: Management of Special Status Animals and Plants and Natural communities</i> | Not addressed. | Closure of some routes will reduce the amount of habitat subjected to occasional disturbance from vehicles. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| <i>From Issue 4: Wild Horses and Burros</i> | Burros may degrade riparian habitat where they seek water and shade which can have an indirect affect on species of birds. | The negative effects of burros on some special status animals, and burro deer in particular, would be reduced somewhat by the fencing of some of the natural waters. Elimination of burros from HAs will benefit special status animals by reducing habitat damage, especially in sensitive riparian habitat along the Colorado River and in Desert Dry Wash Woodland, increase forage and cover for wildlife, increase availability of water and allow over-grazed areas to recover. | Impacts are similar to the Preferred Alternative. | Impacts are similar to the Preferred Alternative. |
| <i>From Issue 5: Motorized Vehicle Access/Routes of Travel Designations/Recreation</i> | Vehicle use on highways and, to a lesser degree, roadways results in some mortality of wildlife, especially vulnerable or slow moving animals, such as flat-tailed horned lizards and desert rosy boa. | Designating a routes network will result in a decrease in negative impacts associated with off-road activities, such as habitat degradation, proliferation of roads, harassment of wildlife and road kills. | Impacts are similar to the Preferred Alternative. | Impacts are similar to the Preferred Alternative. |
| Impacts to Wilderness <i>From Issue 2: Recovery of the Desert Tortoise</i> | Management of Category I and II desert tortoise habitat will likely have no effect on, or may benefit wilderness resources to the degree that natural conditions are preserved, and plant and animal diversity is protected. | Actions specific to the recovery of the desert tortoise in the DWMA are not expected to adversely affect wilderness resources. In general, such actions would likely benefit wilderness resources to the degree that natural conditions would be preserved, and plant and animal diversity would be protected. | Impacts are similar to the Preferred Alternative. | Impacts are similar to the Preferred Alternative. |
| | Not addressed. | Elimination of the Chemehuevi and a portion of the Lazy Daisy allotments would likely enhance natural conditions within portions of the | Impacts are similar to the Preferred Alternative. | Impacts are similar to the Preferred Alternative. |

Table S-2 Cumulative Summary of Alternative Impacts

| Impact Topic | No Action Alternative | Preferred/Large DWMA | Small DWMA A Alternative | Small DWMA B Alternative |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| Impacts to Wilderness <i>From Issue 2: Recovery of the Desert Tortoise</i> | (See above) | Old Woman Mountains, Turtle Mountains and the Chemehuevi Mountains Wilderness areas. | (See above) | (See above) |
| <i>From Issue 3: Management of Special Status Animals and Plants and Natural Communities</i> | Not addressed. | Construction of 22 bighorn sheep guzzlers would not substantially affect the overall natural character of any particular wilderness area. During periods of construction, opportunities for solitude or a primitive type of recreation would be adversely affected. | Impacts are similar to the Preferred Alternative. | Bighorn sheep guzzlers will be developed outside wilderness areas so that the natural character of the wilderness landscape would not be affected, and opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined type of recreation would not be constrained by the project. |
| <i>From Issue 4: Wild Horses and Burros</i> | Continued management of existing Chemehuevi HMA will have no substantial impacts on natural conditions in wilderness areas as long as burros are managed at prescribed levels and in accordance with applicable plans. | Combining the Chemehuevi and Havasu HMAs into one HMA would integrate a substantially larger portion of the Whipple Mountains Wilderness into an area managed for retention of burros. | Managing HA for zero wild horses and burros would alleviate potential impacts to natural conditions if herd level exceed the established AML. | Similar to the Preferred Alternative with the addition of the establishment of the Piute Mountain HMA which will incorporate most of the Piute Mountains Wilderness. |
| <i>From Issue 5: Motorized-Vehicle Access/Routes of Travel Designations/Recreation</i> | Under this alternative, motorized-vehicle access to wilderness boundaries would be maximized as all “existing” routes would be available for use. When opportunities for such access are maximized, the potential for unauthorized incursions into | Combining historical burro range Chocolate/Mule Mountains HA and Cibola/Trigo HA into one HMA would integrate a substantially larger portion of the Indian Pass, Picoach Peak, and Little Picoach Peak Wildernesses into an area managed for retention of burros. | Managing HA for zero wild horses and burros would alleviate potential impacts to natural conditions if herd level exceed the established AML. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | | Under this alternative, motorized-vehicle access to wilderness boundaries would be somewhat reduced relative to the No Action Alternative with establishment of “washless closed zones” in DWMAS and application of biological | Motorized-vehicle access to wilderness boundaries would be somewhat reduced within DWMAS relative to the Preferred Alternative. As opportunities for access to wilderness boundaries are reduced, the potential for unauthorized | Same as the Small DWMA A Alternative. |

Table S-2 Cumulative Summary of Alternative Impacts

| Impact Topic | No Action Alternative | Preferred/Large DWMA | Small DWMA A Alternative | Small DWMA B Alternative |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| Impacts to Wilderness <i>From Issue 5: Motorized- Vehicle Access/Routes of Travel Designations/Recreation</i> | wilderness is concomitantly increased. | parameters. As opportunities for access to wilderness boundaries are reduced, the potential for unauthorized incursion into wilderness is concomitantly decreased. | incursions into wilderness is concomitantly decreased. (See above) | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| Impacts to Livestock Grazing Management <i>From Issue 1: Standards and Guidelines</i> | Straying from the <i>Johnson Valley to Parker</i> route into the Sheephole Valley Wilderness and from the <i>Parker to 40</i> into the Turtle Mountains could result in degradation of wilderness resources. Additionally, it is reasonable to expect that course widening, short cutting and illegal cross-country travel could occur during future events given the nature of high-speed vehicle racing. | The potential for adverse impacts from the <i>Johnson Valley to Parker</i> competitive recreation route include straying from approved race course into the Sheephole Valley Wilderness. The <i>Parker to 40</i> competitive recreation route would be deleted thereby avoiding any adverse impacts from potential straying. | Under this alternative, competitive off-highway vehicle events would be prohibited throughout the planning area except in areas designated “open” to motorized-vehicle use. This action could benefit wilderness to the degree that potential straying from approved race courses into designated wilderness would be averted. | Adoption of the Regional Standards for Public Land Health and guidelines for grazing management are similar to those discussed under the No Action Alternative. |
| From Issue 2: Recovery of the Desert Tortoise | Rangeland health conditions have been assessed for all allotments and except for the West Well in the Chemehuevi allotment, all standards have been attained. There may be a need for temporary reduction or shifts in grazing activities in small areas for a limited period to restore soil and vegetative conditions. | Adoption of the Regional Standards for Public Land Health and guidelines for grazing management are similar to those discussed under the No Action Alternative. | Reducing the size of the Lazy Daisy allotment by 37 percent will result in a loss of 709 AUM. This is a 22 percent reduction in cattle use which is a significant and adverse consequence to the lessee. | Same as the Small DWMA A Alternative. |

Table S-2 Cumulative Summary of Alternative Impacts

| Impact Topic | No Action Alternative | Preferred/Large DWMA Alternative | Small DWMA A Alternative | Small DWMA B Alternative |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| Impacts to Livestock Grazing Management <i>From Issue 2: Recovery of the Desert Tortoise</i> | (See above) | The deletion of the Chemehuevi Allotment will result in the elimination of livestock production. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | The Chemehuevi Allotment is reduced by 27 percent of ephemeral forage, which reduces the AUM by (*). A grazing strategy could directly affect year-long grazing operations about four out of ten years. |
| <i>From Issue 3: Management of Special Status Animals and Plants and Natural Communities</i> | Ford Dry Lake and Rice Valley domestic sheep grazing allotments operate under biological opinions issued | With the cancellation of the Ford Dry Lake allotment, potential sheep production would cease. Reduction of the Rice Valley Allotment would impact livestock use along the west and southwest edge of the allotment. | The result of deleting the Ford Dry Lake and the Rice Valley domestic sheep grazing allotments would be a complete removal of livestock production from these areas. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| Impacts to Wild Horses & Burros <i>From Issue 2: Recovery of the Desert Tortoise</i> | Portions of Chemehuevi and Chocolate/Mule Mountain HMAs overlap portion of designated Category I and II desert tortoise critical habitat. However, the portions where they overlap has low frequency of burro occurrence. | Negative impacts to burros from recovery of the desert tortoise include exclusion from historical burro range and reduction in overall HMA. However, where there has been a boundary adjustment, there is a low frequency of burro occurrence. | This action has the most significant negative impacts to the management of burros in which all burrow would be removed. | Both DWMAs will overlap portions of the proposed Chemehuevi and the Chocolate/Mule Mountains HMAs. However, the portions of overlap have low frequency of use by burros. |
| | Not addressed. | Elimination of competition between cattle and burros on the Chemehuevi grazing allotment will result in a direct positive benefit to burros through the elimination of forage competition. | Not addressed. | Competition between cattle and burros on the Chemehuevi grazing allotment will continue. |
| <i>From Issue 3: Management of Special Status Animals and Plants and Natural Communities</i> | Not addressed. | Fencing one third of the water new water developments may disperse the use of by grazing ungulates of the vegetation resources such that dietary overlap is reduced. Unfenced water developments outside HMAs may expand the burros range. | Direct impacts related to fencing all waters would include: displacement of burros in the area if they aren't removed prior to fencing, and direct mortality from dehydration. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |

Table S-2 Cumulative Summary of Alternative Impacts

| Impact Topic | No Action Alternative | Preferred/Large DWMA Alternative | Small DWMA A Alternative | Small DWMA B Alternative |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Impacts to Wild Horses & Burros <i>From Issue 3: Management of Special Status Animals and Plants and Natural Communities</i> | Working with cooperators to assist in the BLM's mission to mange wild horse and burro herds within their AML and to establish where there are conflicts with species, agencies and other uses. | Bighorn sheep ranges overlap the majority of burro herd areas. Competition for forage in these overlap areas could occur, however burros shall be managed within the established AML which would allocate forage and natural water resources equally among burros and wildlife. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| <i>From Issue 4: Wild Horses and Burros</i> | The current management of overlapping HAs ad HMAs with variant management decisions and prescriptions would result in inefficient management of burros between California and Arizona. | Combining Chemehuevi and Havasu HAs into one HA reduces the area by 336,650 acres and the AML by 42. This alternative maintains one of three current viable wild burro HMAs in the CDD. | Herd Areas would be recognized but HMAs would not be designated for retention and management of either wild horses or burros. Impacts to wild burros would be complete removal through live trapping using helicopter assisted removals or water/bait trapping. | Combining the Chemehuevi and Havasu HAs into one HA and HMA reduces the area by 221,260 acres and maintains the AML of 150 burros. |
| | <i>From Issue 5: Wild Mammals</i> | The current management of overlapping HAs ad HMAs with variant management decisions and prescriptions would result in inefficient management of burros between California and Arizona. | Combining the Chocolate/Mule Mountains and Cibola/Trigo HAs into one HA reduces the area by 198,602 and the AML by 91 burros. | (See above) |
| | | Manage the Piute Mountain HA for zero burros, removing current population. | Same as the No Action Alternative. | Managing the Piute Mountain HA reverses the decision from the CDCA Plan not to manage burros in this HA. Requirements to manage this HA may include augmenting the herd with other burros to increase genetic viability and accessing Fennel and Barrel Springs for water |

Table S-2 Cumulative Summary of Alternative Impacts

| Impact Topic | No Action Alternative | Preferred/Large DWMA | Small DWMA A Alternative | Small DWMA B Alternative |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| Impacts to Recreation Use <i>From Issue 2: Recovery of the Desert Tortoise</i> | Route designations, which are applicable principally to casual use, would have little to no effect on access for non-casual purposes. | The network of routes available for casual use as proposed under this alternative—which, in part, is based on actions to recover the desert tortoise including the establishment of “washes closed zones” in DWMAs would provide <i>reasonable</i> access for both motorized and non-motorized recreational activities. Except for wilderness areas wherein casual motorized-vehicle use is prohibited, recreationists would be able to drive their vehicles within reasonable proximity to most public lands within the Planning Area. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | | Where traditional access is limited or precluded consequent to the route designation process, opportunities for stopping, parking, and vehicle camping are also limited or precluded. As all “existing” routes would be available for use under this alternative, except for “non-routes” and “partial non-routes,” opportunities for these activities would not be further constrained. | Restricting stopping and parking to 30 feet from centerline of an approved route in DWMAs would minimally affect opportunities for recreation. As a common practice, vehicles generally pull off the road to stop and park no more than the proposed limitation except when a feature of interest might be further away. | Limiting stopping, parking and vehicle camping to within 300 feet of route centerline in DWMAs enhances opportunities for these activities. |
| <i>From Issue 3: Management of Special Status Animals and Plants and Natural Communities</i> | | No additional criteria are proposed for the management of special status animals and plants and natural communities, therefore adverse impacts to recreation are not anticipated. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |

Table S-2 Cumulative Summary of Alternative Impacts

| Impact Topic | No Action Alternative | Preferred/Large DWMA Alternative | Small DWMA A Alternative | Small DWMA B Alternative |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| Impacts to Recreation Use <i>From Issue 3: Management of Special Status Animals and Plants and Natural communities</i> | Not addressed. | Under this alternative, the area designations of Ford Dry Lake and Rice Valley Dunes would be changed to preclude vehicular “free-play”. This will have little impact on OHV enthusiasts due to the low level of use at both areas. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| From Issue 5: Motorized Vehicle Access/Routes of Travel Designations/Recreation | Adverse impacts to such recreational endeavors as competitive vehicle events are considered negligible. | Elimination of the <i>Parker to 400</i> corridor would result in no adverse impacts to recreational opportunities because the race has not been run in over a decade and interest is no longer being expressed. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |
| | | This alternative provides for the <i>Johnson Valley to Parker</i> corridor in accordance with conditions prescribed in the CDCA Plan and the <i>Johnson Valley to Parker EIS</i> (1980). | Same as the No Action Alternative with the exception there would be additional conditions imposed on the race that could cause the application process to be extended. | Elimination of the <i>Johnson Valley to Parker</i> would adversely affect opportunities for competitive off-highway vehicle events only if interest recently expressed to rekindle the event is expressed in the form of an application to the BLM for a special recreational permit. |
| Impacts to Motor Vehicle Access <i>From Issue 2: Recovery of the Desert Tortoise</i> | Impacts that affect casual motorized-vehicle access are described under <i>Issue 2, Recreation Management</i> . | Impacts that affect casual motorized-vehicle access are described under <i>Issue 2, Recreation Management</i> . | Impacts that affect casual motorized-vehicle access are described under <i>Issue 2, Recreation Management</i> . | Impacts that affect casual motorized-vehicle access are described under <i>Issue 2, Recreation Management</i> . |
| From Issue 3: Management of Special Status Animals and Plants and Natural communities | Impacts that affect casual motorized-vehicle access are described under <i>Issue 2, Recreation Management</i> . | Impacts that affect casual motorized-vehicle access are described under <i>Issue 2, Recreation Management</i> . | Impacts that affect casual motorized-vehicle access are described under <i>Issue 2, Recreation Management</i> . | Impacts that affect casual motorized-vehicle access are described under <i>Issue 2, Recreation Management</i> . |

Table S-2 Cumulative Summary of Alternative Impacts

| Impact Topic | No Action Alternative | Preferred/Large DWMA Alternative | Small DWMA A Alternative | Small DWMA B Alternative |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| Impacts to Motor Vehicle Access <i>From Issue 5: Motorized-Vehicle Access/Routes of Travel Designations/Recreation</i> | Impacts that affect casual motorized-vehicle access are described under <i>Issue 2</i> , Recreation Management. | Impacts that affect casual motorized-vehicle access are described under <i>Issue 2</i> , Recreation Management. | Impacts that affect casual motorized-vehicle access are described under <i>Issue 2</i> , Recreation Management. | Impacts that affect casual motorized-vehicle access are described under <i>Issue 2</i> , Recreation Management. |
| Impacts to Mineral Development <i>From Issue 2: Recovery of the Desert Tortoise</i> | There would be no additional mitigation, compensation, and reclamation requirements and costs to those already in place. | Compensation requirements would be simplified to one formula but would increase for small operations and would possibly reduce for a few large operations. In areas where MUC M changes to MUC L casual use would be subject to more costly and time-consuming plans of operations and NEPA review. | There would be no additional mitigation, compensation, and reclamation requirements and costs to those already in place, but smaller DWMAs would mean that fewer acres would be subject to described affects. | There would be no additional mitigation, compensation, and reclamation requirements and costs to those already in place. |
| From Issue 3: <i>Management of Special Status Animals and Plants and Natural communities</i> | Not addressed. | Nearly all operations would benefit from the authorization streamlining of the 100 acres programmatic plan consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Requiring a performance bond and performance standards for reclamation would increase the cost for all surface-disturbing operations regardless of size. | There would be no additional mitigation, compensation, and reclamation requirements and costs to those already in place. | Minerals operations in WHMAs could be subject to a variety of small scale surveys, mitigation, compensation, and reclamation requirements that could result in a slight increase in the cost of operation and shutdown of operations. |
| | | | Same as the No Action Alternative. | Impacts are similar to those described in the Preferred Alternative, however the WHMAs are smaller therefore, mitigation, compensation and reclamation requirements would be over a smaller area. |

Table S-2 Cumulative Summary of Alternative Impacts

| Impact Topic | No Action Alternative | Preferred/Large DWMA Alternative | Small DWMA A Alternative | Small DWMA B Alternative |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Impacts to Mineral Development <i>From Issue 5: Motorized-Vehicle Access/Routes of Travel Designations/Recreation</i> | There would be a slight loss of access from closing non-routes which could affect casual mining activity. | Same as the No Action Alternative. | Access in DWMAs would be considerably more reduced, having a greater affect on casual mining activity and creating more instances of access authorizations; however, outside DWMAs access network would increase to nearly the extent of the No Action Alternative and reduce the need for access authorizations. | Access in DWMAs would be considerably more reduced, having a greater affect on casual mining activity and creating more instances of access authorizations; however, outside DWMAs access network would increase to nearly the extent of the No Action Alternative and reduce the need for access authorizations. |
| <i>From Issue 6: Land Ownership Pattern</i> | Some simplification of the checkerboard ownership pattern is occurring in tortoise critical habitat which could simplify legal aspects of mining rights in these areas. | Consolidations of land ownership could be a beneficial in that access and operations involving single, uncomplicated ownership patterns could simplify legal aspects of mining rights as long as surface and mineral estates were not split | Extended periods of time may be required to complete acquisition goals as there would be fewer acres in higher priority DWMAs and more acres in lower priority WHMAs. | There would be no essential change from the Preferred Alternative except that acquisitions/ownership consolidations would cover less area (50% conservation zone goal). |
| Impacts to Lands and Land Use Authorization <i>From Issue 2: Recovery of the Desert Tortoise</i> | Under this alternative there would be little change to the current management practices of processing for land use application. Applicable mitigation measures and other compensation are currently required for new impacts to desert tortoises and its habitat according to current policy. | Compensation requirement would be simplified to one formula, but would increase for small actions that would have had been guided by less than 5:1 ratio and possibly reduce for the few very large operations that would have met a 6:1 ratio requirement. | Impacts are similar to those described in the Preferred Alternative but smaller DWMAs would mean that fewer acres would be subject to described affects. | Same as the Small DWMA A Alternative but a 3% surface disturbance limit it would result in fewer negative discretionary decisions for lands actions requests over time or that the threshold would actually be reaches. |
| <i>From Issue 3: Management of Special Status Animals and Plants and Natural Communities</i> | Under this alternative there would be little change to the current management practices of processing application for utilities and other rights-of-way. Habitat protection for special status species will continue to help define design and mitigation requirements for lands actions. | Lands actions proposals in WHMAs could be subject to a variety of small scale surveys, mitigation, compensation, and reclamation requirements that could result in a slight increase in the cost of operation and shutdown of operations. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative with the exception that there would be fewer acres in the WHMAs so there would be lower mitigation, compensation, and reclamation requirements implications. |

Table S-2 Cumulative Summary of Alternative Impacts

| Impact Topic | No Action Alternative | Preferred/Large DWMA Alternative | Small DWMA A Alternative | Small DWMA B Alternative |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| Impacts to Lands and Land Use Authorization <i>From Issue 5: Motorized-Vehicle Access/Routes of Travel Designations/Recreation</i> | There would be a slight loss of access from closing non-routes which could affect access to some private lands. | There would be not additional impacts here from the No Action Alternative. | Access in DWMAS would be considerably more reduced, having a greater effect on casual access to private lands and various right-of-way. | While access in DWMAS would be considerable more reduced, the access network outside DWMAS would be increased to nearly the same network as in the No Action Alternative. This could possibly reduce the need for access authorizations to private lands. |
| From Issue 6: Land Ownership Pattern | Some simplifications of the checkerboard ownership pattern is occurring in tortoise critical habitat which could simplify legal aspects of lands actions which currently cross mixtures of public and private lands. | Consolidations of land ownership is greater than in the No Action Alternative and could be even more beneficial to land actions where there are single, uncomplicated ownership patterns. | There would be no essential change from the Preferred Alternative other than it may require a longer period of time to complete acquisition goals in this alternative as there would be fewer acres in higher priority DWMAS and more acres in lower priority WHMAS. | There would be no essential change from the Small DWMA A Alternative except that the acquisitions/ownership consolidations target area is reduced (50% conservation zone goal). |
| Impacts to Socio-economic <i>From Issue 2: Recovery of the Desert Tortoise</i> | Development proposed in Lazy Daisy Allotment would impact the lessee by increased coordination and cost associated with installation of improvements. | Reduction of acreage in the Lazy Daisy Allotment would not significantly affect grazing operations due to the ephemeral production of the area. | Loss of the northeast portion Lazy Daisy Allotment, and cancellation of ephemeral grazing use would directly impact livestock production on 148,927 acres. Based on past use, impacts to Lazy Daisy Allotment appear minor. The potential voluntarily relinquishment by the lessee of all grazing use in Lazy Daisy Allotment has no effect until activated. After the lessee requests relinquishment, cattle production would cease on 470,207 acres. | Impacts are the same as the Small DWMA A Alternative. |

Table S-2 Cumulative Summary of Alternative Impacts

| Impact Topic | No Action Alternative | Preferred/Large DWMA Alternative | Small DWMA A Alternative | Small DWMA B Alternative |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Impacts to Socio-economic <i>From Issue 2: Recovery of the Desert Tortoise</i> | Current, socio-economic impacts to lessees that lease the Chemehuevi Allotment would not change. | Cancellation of the Chemehuevi Allotment would directly impact livestock production. Cancellation of Chemehuevi Allotment would preclude potential production of livestock. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Reducing the Chemehuevi allotment by 37 percent would not be a loss of perennial AUMs because this is an ephemeral allotment, there would be substantial impact to management flexibility. The consequence of this reduction would make the grazing season so short and cattle numbers so low that economic benefits would be marginal. |
| <i>From Issue 3: Management of Special Status Animals and Plants and Natural Communities</i> | Current, socio-economic impacts to lessees that lease the Rice Valley and Ford Dry Lake Allotments would not change. | Deleting Ford Dry Lake Allotment would have a negative impact on the grazing operator by eliminating the economic benefit from sheep production. The economic impact would be minimal however, because the allotment is ephemeral and is only grazed in years when forage production is greater than 350 pounds-per-acre. | Deleting Rice Valley Sheep allotment would have a negative impact on the grazing operator by eliminating the economic benefit from sheep operations. The economic impact would be minimal however, because the allotment is ephemeral and is only grazed in years when forage production is greater than 350 pounds-per-acre. | Same as the Small DWMA A Alternative. |
| <i>From Issue 5: Motorized- Vehicle Access/Routes of Travel Designations/Recreation</i> | The closing of routes that would add to routes already closed through the CDPA in 1994 would bring the total roads closed to about 18%. This would have a minor affect upon casual use access and recreation. | Designating routes as “open”, “closed” or “limited” will not significantly affect traffic patterns. Less than 5% of inventoried routes are proposed for closure and wash-closed zones will have little to no significant soci-economic affect on the human component. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. | Same as the Preferred Alternative. |

Chapter 1 Introduction

This document consists of a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) analyzing the effects of proposed management actions and alternatives for the Planning Area of the Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan (NECO). The draft EIS has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (40 CFR 1500).

1.1 Purpose, Need and Scope

The primary purpose of this EIS is to amend or create land use plans and specific management prescriptions for species and habitats on Federal lands, providing in particular for the recovery of the desert tortoise. Plans to be amended include the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) 1980 California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan, the BLM 1987 Yuma District Resource Management Plan for wild horse and burro management only and the Joshua Tree National Park (JTNP) General Management Plan. The applicable portion of NECO will serve as the basis for resource management plan for the Chocolate Mountains Aerial Gunnery Range (CMAGR), as required by Title VIII in the 1994 California Desert Protection Act. CMAGR is managed by the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station, Yuma (USMC).

The desert tortoise was listed in 1990 as a threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act. By law, land managing agencies are required to review their current land use plans, adjust them as necessary, and consult on their adequacy with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). USFWS will then issue a *biological opinion* on plan adequacy. In 1994 the USFWS designated *critical habitat* for the desert tortoise. Critical habitat comprises about 42% of the NECO Planning Area and, along with desert tortoise habitat in JTNP, comprises significant portions of lands managed by BLM, CMAGR and JTNP. In 1994 the FWS issued the Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Recovery Plan which provides recommendations for land planning and tortoise management; these recommendations are an important consideration in developing NECO.

Special status species include all State and Federally listed threatened and endangered species and other species given special attention by agencies. The latter is made up of species designated as *sensitive* by the BLM in California, candidate and species of special concern by USFWS, and species of special concern by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). Given the complex relationship among species and their habitats, the increasing number of species listings over the past several years, and the prospect of more listings, it is convenient, logical, and even prudent to broaden the scope of the plan to a multiple species/habitats level. A complex *ecosystem* approach offers the best opportunity to arrest the decline in biodiversity and eliminate or minimize the need for further listings.

Hand in hand with the biodiversity approach is the need for agencies to coordinate planning and management actions. While species and habitats cross the boundaries and regulatory responsibilities of many agencies, historically agencies have not coordinated land management on a strategic or landscape basis. Despite the well meaning efforts of all parties there has been little assurance that biodiversity declines will stabilize and reverse and the species will persist. Therefore, one of the fundamental needs for the Planning Area has been to accomplish the plan on a cooperative basis. The cooperating agencies include the three Federal land managing agencies (BLM, NPS, USMC) plus a number of other local, state, and Federal agencies. Among the more involved non-land managing agencies are USFWS, CDFG and the counties of San Bernardino, Riverside, and Imperial. Several non-governmental interests have been involved as well.

To aid cooperative implementation of the plan for such tasks as habitat management actions and monitoring for all special status species and natural communities, this plan will also be developed as a Sikes Act Plan in cooperation with CDFG under the authorities of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (P.L. 94-579) and the Sikes Act, Title II (P.L. 93-452 and P.L. 95-420) and the Master Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between BLM and CDFG to cooperatively prepare comprehensive wildlife habitat management plans. The Sikes Act authorizes BLM to develop and implement plans in cooperation with state fish and game departments for the development and protection of wildlife habitat. It authorizes the preparation of MOUs for the transfer of funds between agencies for the completion of projects, inventories, studies, and other programs. It is BLM policy that whenever possible, habitat management plans are developed in full cooperation with state agencies under Sikes Act authority. The Master MOU affirms that to the maximum extent possible, wildlife activity plans will be cooperatively developed as Sikes Act plans.

Another purpose is to implement the "Rangeland Reform 94" initiative to improve ecological conditions while providing for sustainable development and uses on public lands. While this program is a BLM initiative, the standards by which ecological health will be measured will help define the goal for planning and coordination across agencies boundaries as noted above.

There are two major features of this initiative. One is to develop and adopt a set of Standards or goals which define the characteristics of healthy ecosystems. These standards have in essence been a part of land management practices but were never defined in so many words. Measurements to determine how well standards are being met are also defined. The other major feature is to develop Guidelines for managing domestic livestock operations to help meet the Standards for the areas managed under grazing lease. BLM's Desert Advisory Council has been instrumental in helping to develop the Standards and Guidelines for the California Desert District. While this initiative applies to BLM-managed lands, the adopted Standards will be used to guide the development of this plan and measure the effectiveness of land management for all Federal lands. For more on this subject, refer to Appendix B.

A final purpose is to incorporate land use designations contained in the 1994 California Desert Protection Act into the CDCA Plan.

Plan management and decisions apply only to Federal lands. The plan is not a habitat conservation plan (HCP) covering private lands. Private lands may be indirectly affected, however, through nexus with Federal lands and from land acquisition/disposal initiatives. Conversely, over many year's period, some land uses proposed for private lands adjacent to public (i.e., federal and state) lands could have significant effects on public lands and reduce the effectiveness of public land management. Such actions include ground water pumping and landfills. While it is beyond the scope of NECO to address use of private lands, an attempt is made to identify how some adjacent land uses could create public land management issues and "red flag" them for land managers to articulate and ask for objective review through CEQA.

This plan creates an overall framework for managing and allocating public land resources and uses in the Planning Area for a number of years. The effective life varies by plan aspect - e.g., management needs for various species, data and models reliability, and assumptions about the future - so no one number of years is identified. For instance, goals and objectives for species and habitats are more or less permanent while recovery of the desert tortoise could take a hundred or more years. The need for management areas and the suite of proposals for them, therefore has long-term application. Some data are rather complete and others are not. Much of the plan is based upon models which can change as data are improved or conditions and uses change. It may be necessary to amend the plan at a later date, due to unforeseen events (e.g., an increase in the list of special status species, more listings under state or Federal endangered species acts, a change in

mission or major land uses on BLM or CMAGR Federal lands). With this in mind we should consider the plan as ever changing - different rates and milestones and priorities for different aspects. A proposed action common to all alternatives is that the NECO cooperators meet annually to address many subjects, including the application of all parts of the plan and act to update and change parts accordingly.

This draft EIS analyzes four alternatives; No Action- Current Management, the Preferred/Large DWMA Alternative, Small DWMA A Alternative and Small DWMA B Alternative. This draft EIS has been prepared for the draft NECO plan and alternatives in order to comply with the NEPA of 1969. NEPA requires Federal agencies to prepare statements documenting environmental consequences of Federal actions significantly affecting the human environment. An amendment to the CDCA plan qualifies as a significant action and thus requires the preparation of an EIS.

1.2 Planning Area

The Planning Area amounts to about 5 percent of California and is located in the southeast corner of the State (Map 1-1 Appendix A). Specifically, starting from the City of Needles on I-40, the NECO boundary¹ runs south along the CDCA boundary, parallel to the Colorado River, to the Quechon Indian Reservation near Yuma, AZ. (Note that the Colorado River, the state line, is not the boundary.) The boundary skirts the reservation to the All American Canal near the International border. The boundary follows the All American Canal to I-8, east to Ogilby Road, and then north on Ogilby Road to its intersection with the Southern Pacific Railroad. The boundary then runs north along the Railroad to its intersection with the western boundary of the CMAGR, then along CMAGR western boundary to its intersection with the Coachella Canal. The boundary runs north along the east side of the Canal to its intersection with Dillon Road in Coachella Valley, then north along Dillon Road to its intersection with the western boundary of T4S R8E, then north along this line to its intersection with the southern boundary of JTNP. At this point the Plan boundary runs east and north on a zigzagging course following section lines through and to the northern boundary of JTNP. The NECO boundary roughly splits JTNP into two equal west-east halves. The NECO boundary then runs east along the northern boundary of JTNP to a point where it turns north and away from JTNP along the east side of T1S R13E. North of this township the boundary zigzags northwest along section lines through the Sheep Hole Mountains to Amboy Road at Sheep Hole Pass. At this point the boundary runs north along Amboy Road to its intersection with Historic Route 66 near Amboy, runs east on this highway to the Kelbaker Road, then north on the Kelbaker Road to its intersection with I-40. At this point the boundary runs east to Needles (Map 1-2 Appendix A).

The NECO Planning Area comprises 5,547,665 acres of private, Federal and state land. The majority of the Planning Area land is public land, with a total of 3,823,194 acres (Fig. 1-2). Three Federal agencies manage 86% of the 5.5 million acres of the Planning Area (Map 1-3 Appendix A). Each of the three Federal land managing agencies has land use plans or programs which generally provide a zoning approach to management with goals and allowable uses and prescriptions. These plans and programs are described in section 1.6.

1.3 Planning Process Description

The planning process (Fig. 1-1) for this EIS began in March 1994 with a series of public scoping meetings.

¹Where the boundary is a demographic feature, the exact boundary will be the centerline of the feature.

During this process, six planning issues were identified by the public:

- Recovery of the Desert Tortoise
- Management of Special Status Plants and Animals and Natural Communities
- Designation of Routes of Travel
- Land Ownership Pattern
- Access to Resources for Economic/Social needs
- Management of Wild Horses and Burros

Two additional issues, maintenance of the CDCA Plan and standards and guidelines, were added later in the planning process.

1.4 Planning Schedule

The planning process will conclude in 2001 with the completion of the record of decision and follows this approximate schedule:

February 15, 2001

Draft Plan/EIS mailed to public, and placed in selected libraries, and offices of BLM and other cooperating agencies.

February 15, 2001

EPA/BLM published FR Notice and the 90-day public review period begins.

March 15 April 15 2001

Public meetings on Draft Plan/EIS.

May 15, 2001

End 90-day public review period.

August 15, 2001

Proposed Plan/EIS mailed out to public.

August 15, 2001

EPA/BLM published FR Notice and 30-day public protest period begins.

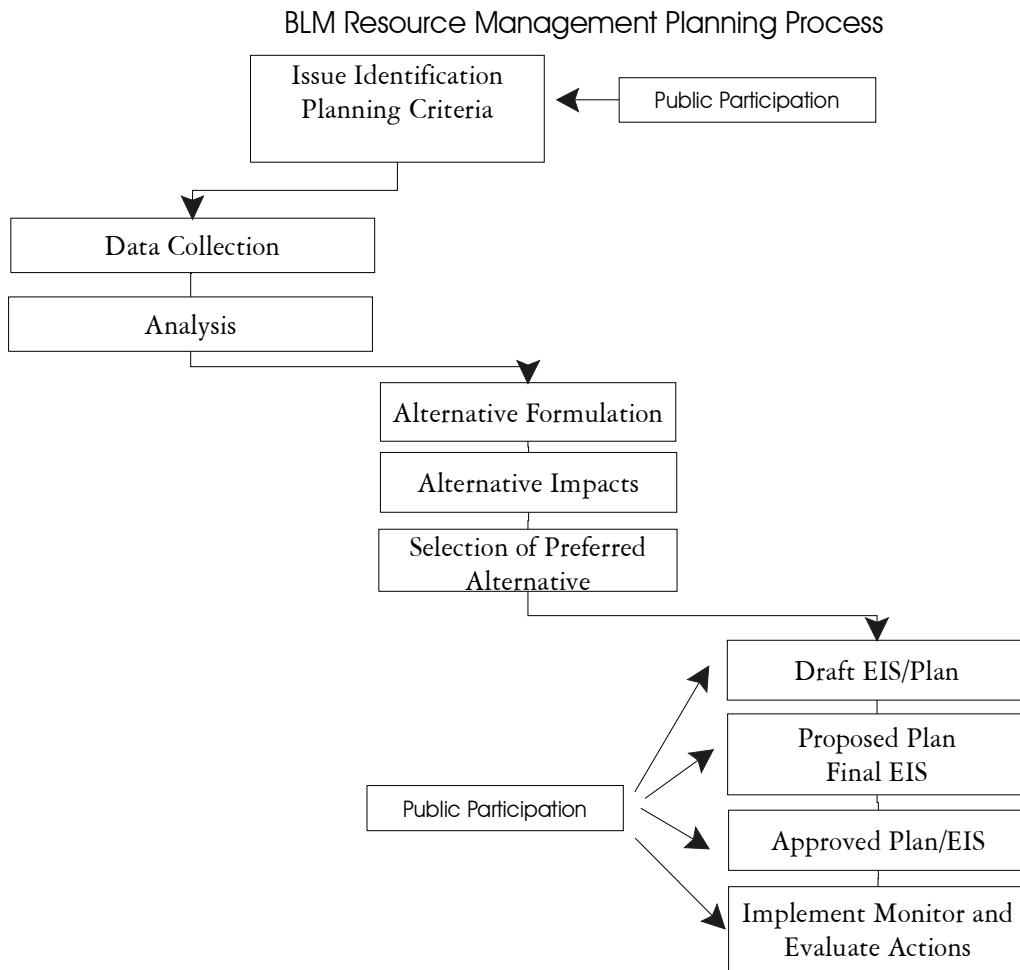
September 15, 2001

End 30-day public protest period.

October 15, 2001

End Governor's consistency review period. Sign Record of Decision.

Figure 1-1 Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Planning Process



1.5 Planning Issues and Criteria

The NECO plan defines and addresses the issues shown on Table 1-1 as identified by BLM, other agencies, and the public. Livestock grazing is addressed in the first three issue sections in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1 Summary of Significant Management Issues and Actions

| Issue | General Management Action |
|---|--|
| Standards and Guidelines | Adopt rangeland Standards for managing ecosystem health and Guidelines for managing domestic livestock uses |
| Recovery of the Desert Tortoise | Identify areas and develop management prescriptions for each recovery unit identified in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan |
| Management of Special Status Plants and Animals and Natural Communities | Develop a strategic framework of areas and prescriptions for managing species and habitats |
| Management of Wild Horses and Burros | Identify areas and management prescriptions for wild burros that achieves the goals of the Wild Horse and Burro Act, the conservation of native species and habitats, and mandates of a variety of affected agencies |
| Designation of Routes of Travel | Designate a system of routes on Federal lands that is commensurate with the conservation of species and habitats and needs for general and special purpose public access |
| Land Ownership Pattern ¹ | Identify public lands managed by BLM and private lands that are suitable for change in ownership to enhance the manageability of public lands for conservation and other public purposes and development of private lands for community and other private purposes |
| Resource Access/Regulatory Burden | Provide access to or through BLM-administered lands for public and private economic and recreation uses. Provide regulatory relief for projects in the land use plan. |
| Maintenance of CDCA Plan | Amend the CDCA Plan of 1980 to incorporate wilderness and other designations passed by Congress in the California Desert Protection Act of 1994. |

¹ Since the 1994 Public Scoping meetings, this issue have been dramatically reduced for both BLM (in tortoise habitat and wilderness areas) and Joshua Tree National Park through the acquisition of over 140, 000 acres of lands previously belonging to Catellus, Inc and the State of California (State Lands Commission).

Planning Criteria are the rules and other factors used to form judgements about data collection, analysis, and decisions making during planning. Planning criteria for the Plan include all applicable Federal laws,

regulations, executive orders, policies and applicable portions of existing land use plan, which the cooperating agencies are required to follow. One highlighted feature of these is the fact that the planning unit lies entirely within the California Desert Conservation Area, which was established by Congress in 1976. Some of the planning criteria, however, were specifically developed for the NECO planning effort. These planning criteria are listed below. Many have been reviewed by the public at various points in the planning process.

Cooperate with Local, State, and Federal Agencies

1. Develop the planning process, data, analyses, and decisions on a cooperative basis for the recovery of the desert tortoise and the conservation of other species and habitats on Federal lands, particularly for those species and habitats which are managed in common, among the following Federal land managing agencies: the Bureau of Land Management, Joshua Tree National Park, and the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station (for the Chocolate Mountains Aerial Gunnery Range).
2. Federal agencies noted above should cooperate with Local, State and Federal land managing and regulating agencies, major private land owners, and leaders of conservation and use interest groups in and adjacent to the Planning Area to define and develop the planning process, data, and analyses and for support of realistic, acceptable, cost effective, and manageable plan decisions.
3. Evaluate the need or opportunity for plan decisions to apply to state and private lands. If the need is not compelling, work with Local and State agencies as noted above and to allow plan decisions to be useful for state and local land use decisions and initiatives to seek Section 10A permits from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

Species, Habitats, and Ecological Processes

1. The desert tortoise and Coachella Valley Milkvetch are the two species in the Planning Area that are Federally listed (threatened) under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Using recommendations contained in the Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan, other documents and data on the desert tortoise and various land uses, establish Desert Wildlife Management Areas (DWMA) and guidelines for the desert tortoise that will provide for the recovery of the species. Similarly, establish management guidelines to protect the Coachella Valley Milkvetch.
2. Identify additional wildlife and plant species of concern for which management should be specifically addressed.
3. Conduct inventories, with a focus on developing and evaluating a map of plant communities upon which many conclusions about the nature of species and habitats may be based, including predicted occurrence of plant and wildlife species of concern.
4. Where data on the occurrence of species of concern is incomplete, develop species/habitat relationship models to provide better understanding about their probable distribution and relationships to habitats.
5. Identify the ecological processes that determine the occurrence and abundance of species and habitats and that should receive management emphasis.

6. Analyze the distribution of biological resources with current management and information about actual and potential uses to determine conflicts.
7. Identify areas where protection of species and habitats should be emphasized and areas where protection emphasis is less important. Develop management guidelines for these areas.
8. Following the direction contained in BLM Instruction Memorandum CA 97-31 identify areas that are representative of plant communities that can be designated as Research Natural Areas.
9. Articulate new guidelines for managing ecosystems in terms of species, habitats, or ecological processes using BLM's Rangeland Standards for Public Lands Health as a guide.

General Resource Uses

Collect information on current resource management, resource uses, and access needs to reflect management in place and the variety and relative importance of uses and needs. The information will be used as a consideration in developing the range of conservation emphases noted above. New use restrictions and requirements will add to/change as necessary current management and will vary with location according to biological and use values and sensitivities.

Routes of Travel

1. Thoroughly and accurately inventory all the routes of travel (roads) within the Planning Area and attribute them with various information: e.g., access purpose, recreation touring, county maintained, surface type).
2. Inventory wash systems where washes are used as routes of travel.
3. Identify a network of routes that will continue to provide for access and recreation needs but will also be compatible with conservation goals noted above. On BLM lands designate routes as open, closed, or limited to use as required by the California Desert Conservation Area Plan of 1980. Extend decisions to washes systems.
4. The consideration of closing or limiting use of routes will require conflict analyses to show conservation issues with specific routes or groups of routes. Justification of purpose or need will not be required where the occurrence of routes is not an issue.
5. Identify appropriate management techniques for key areas of designated routes to best meet the goals and needs for conservation and uses. Consider such tools as providing on-site information and education, signs, ranger patrol priority, and the inclusion or exclusion on maps.

Wild Burros

Wild burros along the Colorado River roam across lands administered by a number of state and Federal agencies, including BLM lands administered by offices in both California and Arizona. These burros also roam back and forth across the eastern planning boundary. BLM is the responsible agency for managing wild burros. Currently the BLM offices in California and Arizona have separate management plans and activities. This situation does not provide for effective decision making and management. Therefore, data collection, analyses, and decisions

that affect wild burros along the Colorado River should be approached on a cooperative basis among the California and Arizona BLM offices, and other affected agencies, and include the area east of the eastern Planning Area boundary in which these burros occur.

Land Tenure Adjustment and Use Authorizations

1. Identify the need for acquisition of private and State Land Commission lands or access to improve the effectiveness of managing areas where protection of species and habitats should be emphasized. Focus on the areas of "checkerboard" land pattern.
2. Inventory private lands for "ownership density" (i.e., number of owners per section). Areas of dense ownership may not be practical for acquisition.
3. Identify those BLM lands which are too isolated or too small to be effectively managed or lands of low resource value and which should be made available for disposal, especially through exchange, to improve the efficiency of land management and provide for private economic opportunities.
4. As much as possible, accomplish land tenure adjustments through land exchanges.
5. Develop general descriptions of operation and maintenance practices for powering and pipeline transmission lines and plan decisions needed to modify operation and maintenance practices for the desert tortoise to generally meet the need to address recovery plus provide a basis for utility companies to directly seek Section 10A permits from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for these practices after the plan is completed.

Other maintenance needed for the 1980 California Desert Conservation Area Plan as a result of the passage of the 1994 California Desert Protection Act

1. Incorporate wilderness designations into the Plan.
2. Re-designate Multiple Use Class C areas that were not included wilderness designations to other appropriate multiple use class(es).

1.6 Relationship To Other Documents

Bureau of Land Management

The goals of the California Desert Conservation Area Plan (CDCA Plan), which covers BLM-managed public lands throughout the California Desert, are defined and achieved through management and program actions and resolution of conflicts. The Plan provides overall direction through four major *multiple-use classes* (MUC): Controlled Use (C) for wilderness areas, Limited Use (L), Moderate Use (M), and Intensive Use (I). Further plan direction - both "programmatic" and on the ground allocations - is included in "plan elements" for such programs as utilities, mining, domestic livestock grazing and specie/habitat protection. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) and Wildlife Habitat Management Areas (HMAs) were designated for further development of site-specific conservation management actions.

The CDCA Plan is an adaptive plan which has been amended numerous times over the past 17 years.

Additionally, in October 1994, Congress passed the Desert Protection Act, which designated *wilderness areas* for the California Desert.

Joshua Tree National Park

Management of JTNP is defined in a *General Management Plan* (HMP) that was completed in 1994. A HMP amendment, the *Back country and Wilderness Management Plan*, was completed in 1999 to bring the HMP up to date with provisions of the California Desert Protection Act.

The purpose of the HMP is to define the overall preservation and use management strategy for resources within the Park. This is approached through management zoning for all lands. Management zoning determines how specific lands in the JTNP are to be managed to protect resources - including species and habitats - and provide for visitor enjoyment. Four zone classifications are used: Natural, Historic, Development, and Special Use. Within each zone, subzones may be designated to allow for particular management needs. Some activity or implementation plans have also been developed for specific resources.

Chocolate Mountains Aerial Gunnery Range

Management of CMAGR for military uses and natural resource management is the responsibility of the Marine Corps Air Station, Yuma (USMC). There is no plan in place for managing natural resources on CMAGR, but current management is described in USMC's Draft EIS for the Yuma Training Range Complex (USMC 1995). In addition, Title VIII of the 1994 California Desert Protection Act requires the Secretaries of Interior and Defense to jointly develop a resource management plan, with management oversight by Interior, for natural resources for the CMAGR. With USMC as a cooperator in the development of the NECO Plan, the USMC will adopt applicable provisions as its resource management plan.

1.7 Current Planning in the Region

Besides the plans noted above, the following are currently in progress (Map 1-4 Appendix A). Consistency coordination is occurring among them depending upon issue commonality.

West Mojave Plan

Lead by BLM, this plan addresses recovery of the desert tortoise and management of a number of other special status species in the western Mojave Desert. The Planning Area is about twice the size of NECO and joins NECO from southern JTNP to Amboy. As with NECO, this plan will amend the CDCA Plan. The plan is also being cooperatively developed by Federal, state, and local agencies and will result in the adoption of a habitat conservation plan to address listed species on private lands.

Northern and Eastern Mojave Plan

Also lead by BLM, this plan addresses recovery of the desert tortoise and management of a few additional species of concern in the area that generally lies between Death Valley National Park and the Mojave National Preserve. The southern boundary of the Planning Area is adjacent to NECO, the separation being I-40. This plan will also amend the CDCA Plan but, as with NECO, only addresses Federal lands. The southern boundary of the Planning Area is adjacent to NECO, the separation being I-40. Extensive areas of desert tortoise habitat lie in both Planning Areas on both sides of I-40.

Coachella Valley Multiple Species Conservation Plan

The lead for this plan is the Coachella Valley Association of Governments. The Planning Area includes most

of the urban and urbanizing area of the Coachella Valley as well as the Santa Rosa Mountains - all only within Riverside County. The plan is primarily addressing issues of urbanization, but, as the area is within the CDCA, some decisions will also amend the CDCA Plan and are covered by the same concern for consistency as noted above. The plan will serve as a habitat conservation plan so decisions will apply to Federal, state, and private lands. The eastern edge of the Planning Area overlaps the NECO Planning Area by about 55,00 acres and will require considerable coordination in developing decisions. It is anticipated that the NECO Plan will be completed first. Even though a considerable amount of plan-plan coordination is occurring, to achieve congruity of decisions for both plans for the area of plans overlap, some NECO decisions may require amending in order to complete the Coachella Valley MSCP.

General Management Plan - Mojave National Preserve

The lead for this plan is the National Park Service, Mojave National Preserve. The goal of the plan is to define the overall preservation and use management strategy for resources - including species and habitats - within the Preserve, which was created in 1994 by the CDPA. A considerable area of the Preserve is desert tortoise habitat. Subsequent to the General Management Plan specific activity or implementation plans will follow. The southern boundary of the Planning Area is adjacent to NECO, the separation being I-40. Extensive areas of desert tortoise habitat lie in both Planning Areas on both sides of I-40.

Lower Colorado River MSCP

The lead for this plan is the Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California but is being cooperatively developed by a large group of agencies and interests. The Planning area encompasses that section of the Colorado River between glen Canyon Dam in Arizona and Mexico and between the 100 year flood plain lines on either side of the river. The scope of the plan is two fold: 1) ecosystem management with a focus on federal and state listed threatened/endangered species; and 2) water and power production.